

Session reflections

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OREGON STATE REPRESENTATIVE NEWS FROM BARBARA SMITH WARNER

Greetings from the end of a legislative session that was transformative, grueling and ultimately game-changing for the state and many of its norms, structures and systems. Led by the House Democrats, the legislature accomplished some incredible things, starting with a 30-years-in-the-making dedicated funding source for education through HB 3427, and including paid family medical leave insurance, youth sentencing reform, oil train regulation, banning no-cause evictions, drivers licenses for all, and much more. Yet the two times that Senate Republicans fled their responsibilities left critical public health issues on the table, like climate disruption, gun violence prevention and vaccine requirements, and demonstrated a Trumpian disregard for the norms of our democratic system, something I am afraid we will be grappling with for months and years to come. I came to Salem to represent YOU. I also recognize that I am part of a bigger system that is responsible for Oregonians from Portland to Prineville, and from Bandon to Baker City. I'm extremely disappointed that my Senate colleagues failed to come to the same conclusion and instead ran away from policy choices that they disagreed with.

Constituent Updates:

Thanks to all who joined me, Rep. Keny-Guyer and Senator Michael Dembrow for our Session Wrap-Up Town Hall on Monday, July 1st. It was a great turnout of more than 100 people:



We discussed the failure and hostage-taking of HB 2020, gun violence prevention, juvenile justice reform, the Student Success Act, the status of agency and program budgets, and much more.

Join us for our traditional Bike Town Hall around back-to-school time! Details TBA soon.

Unfinished Business:

As you likely heard, HB 2020 was the bill to fall in the second destructive debacle with the Senate Republicans refusal to show up for work. This was a major priority for leadership and for me personally, and watching it get bargained over has been a major disappointment. This is truly unfinished business, as I hope we will pass this as soon as possible, in a special session or in the 2020 short session. The Governor is on our side, which is an extremely good sign.

A big sticking point on this issue was the impact that Clean Energy Jobs would have on rural economies and communities. There was overwhelming misinformation about this policy, especially missing the reality that it actually disproportionately supports those rural communities that are already in the midst of a climate crisis. Read more on Senator Dembrow's handy document: [Why HB 2020 is good for rural Oregon](#), and Representative Pam Marsh's statement on the timber industry.

We finished the legislative session in Salem on Sunday June 30, and the Senate did indeed stand strong, like the House has, to pass lot of important bills. These included passing drivers licenses for all, setting up oil train emergency planning, dirty diesel regulations, paid family and medical leave insurance, and refugee resettlement funding. In the meantime, as we discussed at the Town Hall, the Legislature is exploring complaints made against Senator Boquist, potentially referring a change in quorum rules to the ballot, and several other innovative options to make sure that our representative democracy will continue to be upheld.

Finished Business:

HB 3427 -- The Student Success Act

As I've mentioned several times, this bill finally established a dedicated funding source for our Pre-K to 12 public education system. This new corporate activity tax is being set up for the next tax year, so funds will be available starting in the 2020-2021 school year.

SB 1008 -- Youth Sentencing Reform

This bill is a landmark juvenile justice reform bill that will no longer require minors to be tried as adults and will eliminate life without parole sentences for youth under age 18. This bill further establishes a process where all youth who are convicted in adult court have access to a "second look" hearing halfway through their sentence. It also places youth accused of any crimes into the juvenile justice system instead of the adult justice system, and requires a review for youth with long sentences before being transferred to adult prison.

SCR 37 -- Recognizing Parkrose Hero, Keanon Lowe

It was my honor to carry SCR 37 to passage on the House Floor last week. Coach and security officer Lowe jumped into action when a despondent student entered Parkrose High School with a gun last month. Our community owes him an enormous debt for his brave and selfless actions, and this resolution was a very public thank you. But not every community is lucky enough to have a Keanon Lowe. I am so grateful for his actions in Parkrose, but I wish I did not have to be. My wish for Oregon, and one I'll fight for, is that we can continue to think big, and fulfill our moral obligation to pass common-sense policies to help our students and communities to thrive, not just survive. We know there are simple changes we can make to keep our communities safer, including requiring gun owners to safely store their firearms – which would have prevented the Clackamas Town Center shooting. I hope that this resolution also serves as momentum to pass common sense gun violence prevention policy as soon as possible.

SB 998 -- The Idaho Stop bill

I'm still so pleased that I was able to carry this bill to passage at the end of this session, as I worked (unsuccessfully) on this concept in my first long session. SB 998

will allow bicyclists to treat stop signs and blinking red lights as yield signs. As a regular bike commuter, I know that in most residential neighborhood intersections, bicyclists can slow their speed when approaching intersections and safely determine whether they need to come to a full stop or proceed through the intersection without fully stopping. This bill makes this practice legal, and makes specific violations including failing to yield to traffic within the intersection a Class D violation, and subject to a fine of up to \$250.

Throughout the interim I'll send out more information on bills that we passed this year, as well as ideas on strategy and vision for some of the other bills and concepts that didn't pass. Please reach out to my email (rep.barbarasmithwarner@oregonlegislature.gov) with any questions or input.

Sincerely,



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